

I CLAIM:

1) A method of sterilizing mail received in a mail box having a front door comprising the steps of:

providing an internal electromagnetic radiation source to sterilize mail deposited in the mail box;

providing an electric door switch serially connected to the electromagnetic radiation source adapted to close only when the mail box door is closed so that the electromagnetic radiation radiates from the source only when the front door is closed; and,

providing a sterilization timer activated when the mail box door is closed, said timer configured to maintain the electromagnetic source on for a sufficient period after the mail box door is closed to radiate and thereby sterilize any mail deposited in the mail box.

2) A method as in claim 1 wherein the electromagnetic radiation source comprises anti-microbial radiation.

3) A method as in claim 2 wherein the anti-microbial radiation source comprises a fluorescent lamp, having a fluorescent tube, adapted to be positioned within the interior of the mail box.

4) A method as in claim 3 further comprising the step of providing an assembly comprising the fluorescent lamp having a housing adapted to hold the fluorescent tube, said housing additionally housing the sterilization timer and the electric switch in an end portion of the housing; and wherein the electric switch is a push button switch which closes when it is depressed.

5) A method as in claim 4 further comprising the step retro-fitting a separately purchased mailbox by mounting and positioning the assembly in an upper portion of the mail box so that the electric switch is adjacent to and depressed only when the front door of the mail box is closed.

6) A method as in claim 2 further comprising a mail box and a battery power pack for the ultraviolet radiation source.

7) A method as in claim 6 further comprising the step of providing a photo cell on the upper exterior of the mail box configured to charge the battery power pack.

8) A method as in 2 wherein the fluorescent tube is positioned within a lower portion of the mail box and is covered by a transparent mail floor.

9) A method as in claim 1 wherein the electromagnetic source comprises a microwave emitter and further comprising a metal mail box having a metal door to contain microwave radiation.

10) A method as in claim 9 wherein the microwave emitter is positioned within a rear portion of the mail box.

11) An assembly for retrofitting a mail box having a front door, to sterilize mail received therein, comprising:

a fluorescent lamp having a housing adapted to hold a fluorescent tube;

a sterilization timer contained within the housing; and,

an electric push button switch positioned within, and projecting through an end portion of the housing;

so that when the assembly is mounted within an upper portion of the mail box, the button portion of the switch is pushed when the mail box door closed, thereby activating the fluorescent lamp to sterilize any mail contained therein.